

Please amend claims 1, 10, 13, 23, 28 and 33 to appear as follows:

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81 > 1 (Amended) A method of developing product characteristics for a new product comprising the steps of: generating a plurality of product attributes; classifying each of said attributes; generating a preferred product brand position as a function of said product attributes identifying a competitive set of products, and associating each of said product attributes with a preferred competitive level with respect to said competitive set; and generating target product characteristics as a function of said classified product attributes and said preferred product brand position, said target product characteristics representing customer-driven objectives for each of said plurality of product attributes to be incorporated into said new product.

10 (Amended) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein the step of associating each of said product attributes with a preferred competitive level with respect to said competitive set includes the step of prioritizing each product attribute in one of four levels, said first level representing a desire for the product attribute to be a leader (L) with respect to the competitive set, said second level representing a desire for the product attribute to be among the leaders (A) with respect to the competitive set, said third level representing a desire for the product attribute to be

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competitive (C) with respect to the competitive set, and said fourth level representing a desire for the product attribute to be minimally competitive (M) with respect to the competitive set.

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Q3* 18. (Amended) A method of developing product characteristics for a new automotive vehicle comprising the steps of:

generating a plurality of vehicle attributes, said plurality including at least attributes from each of the following groups of vehicle characteristics: usage experience, driving experience, and design;

generating a preferred vehicle brand position as a function of said vehicle attributes including identifying a competitive set of products, and associating each of said vehicle attributes with a preferred competitive level with respect to said competitive set; and

generating target vehicle characteristics as a function of said vehicle attributes and said preferred vehicle brand position, said target vehicle characteristics representing customer-driven objectives for each of said plurality of vehicle attributes to be incorporated into said new automotive vehicle.

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23. (Amended) A method as recited in claim 13 wherein the step of associating each of said vehicle attributes with a preferred competitive level with respect to said competitive set includes the step of prioritizing each vehicle attribute in one of four levels, said first level representing a

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desire for the vehicle attribute to be a leader (L) with respect to the competitive set, said second level representing a desire for the vehicle attribute to be among the leaders (A) with respect to the competitive set, said third level representing a desire for the vehicle attribute to be competitive (C) with respect to the competitive set, and said fourth level representing a desire for the vehicle attribute to be minimally competitive (M) with respect to the competitive set.

28 28. (Amended) A method of developing product characteristics for a new automotive vehicle comprising the steps of:

generating a plurality of vehicle attributes, said plurality including at least attributes from each of the following groups of vehicle characteristics: usage experience, driving experience, and design;

providing a cross-functional product team;

providing target customer characteristics;

providing target vehicle image characteristics; thereafter

generating a preferred vehicle brand position by said cross-functional product team as a function of said vehicle attributes, said target customer characteristics, and said target vehicle image characteristics; and

generating target vehicle objectives by said cross-functional product team as a function of said vehicle attributes and said preferred vehicle brand position, said target vehicle objectives representing customer-driven and

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image-driven characteristics for each of said plurality of vehicle attributes to be incorporated into said new automotive vehicle.

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33. (Amended) A method as recited in claim 28 wherein said cross-functional product team includes at least one member from each of the following corporate departments: vehicle program management, marketing, purchasing, finance, engineering, and design.